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## San Antonio Missions National Historical Park Centennial Initiative News Release



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### **New trail linking Park to the Mission Trail selected for matching funds through NPS Centennial Initiative**

*San Antonio, TX* – San Antonio Missions National Historical Park’s proposal to construct a new trail linking the National Park to the Mission Trail is eligible to receive matching funds through the National Park Service Centennial Initiative. The proposal is eligible for federal matching funds through monies raised by the park’s friends group, Los Compadres de San Antonio Missions National Historical Park.

The proposed hiking trail would link Mission San José with the hike and bike lanes of the Mission Trail, a trail/road linking San Antonio’s five historic missions along the San Antonio River from the Alamo in downtown San Antonio to Mission Espada, the southernmost of San Antonio’s missions. The proposed new trail will increase recreational opportunities for visitors at San Antonio Missions National Historical Park by providing direct access to the San Antonio River and the hike and bike trails along it.

The proposed trail will be paved and handicapped accessible with informational wayside signs interpreting various aspects of daily life, agriculture, and water control engineering accomplishments during the Spanish colonial period of San Antonio’s rich history.

“Los Compadres is delighted to provide the matching funds for this exciting project. We have spent close to \$500,000 for projects in the northern section of Mission San José and this project will provide yet another opportunity for visitors and school children to enjoy the history of our missions,” said Robert Downey, Chairman of the Board. “This trail will show the historic connection of the mission to the San Antonio River and it will also tie in with the Mission Trails and the River Improvements projects,” he added.

“This is a next step forward in developing San Antonio Missions National Historical Park”, says park superintendent Steve Whitesell. “This proposed trail will provide more recreational opportunities to our visitors while also connecting the park with the broader city-wide trail system currently being developed by the City of San Antonio.”

The new hiking trail proposal is one of 201 proposals nationwide National Park Service Director Mary Bomar and Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne announced at a press conference in Yosemite National Park today to celebrate the 91<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the NPS.

“The National Park Service has, after a rigorous review, certified these proposals as eligible for centennial challenge matching funds,” Bomar said. “And they are ready to go in Fiscal Year 2008 which begins Oct. 1”

Director Bomar said, “The centennial challenge is a critical element in the National Park Centennial Initiative put forward by President Bush and unveiled by Secretary Kempthorne one year ago. The full centennial initiative is a potential \$3 billion investment in our national parks, two-thirds of it a public-private partnership of matching money.”

The President’s fiscal year 2008 budget called for an additional \$100 million a year for 10 years to be dedicated to bolster basic park operations, Bomar said. Congress has included the first \$100 million for operations in the fiscal year 2008 budget that awaits final passage.

“The second part of the initiative is the centennial challenge – a funding mechanism to match up to \$100 million a year over 10 years of public money with \$100 million a year for 10 years in private donations,” Bomar said. “Congress has yet to finish legislation necessary to create the public-private centennial challenge.”

Financial commitments to the first round of proposals exceeded the President’s challenge. “We have about \$370 million in proposals with not \$100 million in private commitments but \$216 million committed from park visitors, friends groups and other partners,” Bomar said.

“The new fiscal year begins October 1, and we are excited to get this centennial project underway,” said superintendent Whitesell. “We hope that this will be the first of many centennial projects to be accomplished at San Antonio Missions National Historical Park over the next 10 years through matching funds raised by Los Compadres.”

“When history is written,” Director Bomar said, “the Centennial Initiative will be second only to the creation of the national park system itself.”

The full list of centennial challenge-eligible projects and programs is available on-line at the National Park Service centennial web site [www.nps.gov/2016](http://www.nps.gov/2016)

San Antonio Missions National Historical Park was established in 1978 to preserve, restore, and interpret the Spanish missions of San Antonio, which represent the largest concentration of cultural resources from the Spanish colonial period in the United States. For more information about the National Park Service and San Antonio Missions National Historical Park, please visit our web site at [www.nps.gov/saan](http://www.nps.gov/saan). Los Compadres de San Antonio Missions fundraising efforts provide resources and services for projects that assist San Antonio Missions National Historical Park in preserving, restoring, and interpreting our heritage for this and future generations. For more information about our friends group, Los Compadres de San Antonio Missions National Historical Park, visit [www.loscompadres.org](http://www.loscompadres.org).

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